**Amendments to the Specification**

Please replace the first full paragraph on page 7 with the following amended paragraph:

**Fig. 1b** illustrates how the network configuration can be changed if the module is controllably restructured. In this case, the switch 16 is in its bypass mode, while switch 18 is in the working mode (the dashed line illustrates the connection). Owing to that, elements A and B are inserted in the optical path. Actually, this embodiment demonstrates how one introduces a new element B while keeping the functionality of element A, by introducing A and B together in switch SW2, activating it and simultaneously deactivating switch SW1. If sufficiently fast switches with appropriate delay lines are used, one can obtain almost hitless switching. Of course, the path may be equipped with all the available optical elements ~~20, 22~~ 20.1, 20.2 and 24 if required - to this purpose the control unit 26 should set both switches into the active mode.

Please replace the third full paragraph on page 8 with the following amended paragraph:

**Figs. 3a, 3b and 3c** shows yet another option of arranging the switching devices and optical elements in the module. In this embodiment, the module is marked 40, ~~it~~ and

comprises two optical switches 1x1 marked 42 and 44, an optical splitter 46, and optical coupler 48, two exemplary optical elements A and B marked 43 and 45 respectively, and a control unit 47. This topology of the module is very fast due to fast modern 1x1 switches, though some power loss in the splitter and the coupler have to be taken into account.

Please replace the first full paragraph on page 9 with the following amended paragraph:

**Fig. 4** illustrates yet another modification 50 of the inventive module. The optical switching devices constitute optical matrices (n x m cross-connectors) 52 and 54, connected to one another via an optical internal path 56. The matrices are connectable to a plurality of various optical/non-optical elements ~~generally~~ marked ~~58~~ 51, 53, 55, 57, 59, and the way of connection is controlled by a control unit 60 which controls the internal connectivity in each of the matrices. Owing to loops formed at each stage of the matrices, the elements ~~58~~ 51, 53, 55, 57, 59 may be arranged in various combinations. Fig. 4 shows one example of configuration, formed by inserting a number of elements in the optical path; the internal connections in the matrices are shown in dashed lines. The elements ~~58~~ can thereby be introduced, removed and

exchanged in the module. If a network node comprises such a module, the node can be thus easily reconfigured.

Please replace the second full paragraph on page 9 with the following amended paragraph:

**Fig. 5** shows yet another embodiment 60 of the module, where an optical switch 62 is connectable to an optical matrix 64 like to a network element (marked A). In turn, the matrix 64 is connected to network elements B,C and D (~~generally~~ marked ~~66~~ 61, 63, 65) which can selectively be switched in and off the optical path. In this particular example, these elements are Optical Add/Drop Multiplexers (OADM) which are responsible for selectively introducing/removing particular wavelength channels into the optical path. The switching elements 62 and 64 are controlled by a control unit (CU) 68. One of possible connections is shown by the dashed line.

Please replace the paragraph bridging pages 9 and 10 with the following amended paragraph:

**Fig. 6** illustrates a general case of the module configuration 70, which may have a number of optical inputs and a number of optical outputs, say, for serving different portions of a network node. The module comprises a plurality

of optical switching devices, some of which are in the form of matrices (71, 72, 73), and some in the form of various optical switches Sw1 - SwN. This particular module further comprises three optical splitters generally marked 74, three optical couplers generally marked 75 and a plurality of optical/ non-optical elements A, B,...H ~~generally~~ marked 76, 77, 79...84. The central unit 78 is responsible for arranging required configurations, i.e., for controlling switching devices, and for forming interconnections between the splitters, the couplers, the elements and the switches by forwarding control signals via buses in the module.